Project I.D. No. 94

NAME: Nishiyori Fusa DATE OF BIRTH: 1880 PLACE OF BIRTH: Akita-ken
Age: 97 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: 7 yrs.

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1905 Age: 25 M.S. S Port of entry: Seattle
Occupation/s: 1. housework 2. poultry farmer 3. trading company (husban
Place of residence: 1. Seattle 2. _____ 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Pinedale
Name of relocation center: Twin Lake, Jerome, Hart Mountain
Dispensation of property: leased it to Americans Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: _____

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: _____
Address/es: 1. Vashon, Wash. 2. Seattle, Wash.
3. _____
Religious affiliation: _____
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 8/14/78 Place: Seattle
Translator: Mabel Hall

Nishiyori, Fusa
Aug.14, 1978
Seattle, Wash.

Takarabe: I understand that you were born in Akita Prefecture, and went to Ueno in Tokyo. Did you have ten brothers and sisters?
Nishiyori: Yes, I was adopted. My father was the station master of Ueno station.
T: When you were little your father's friend's baby died, and you were nursed by the baby's mother. Then they adopted you because they loved you.
N: Yes.
Q: When your father went to Tokyo did you go with him?
A: He worked at Ueno station. I learned to play samisen from a mistress who owned a sembei (rice cookies) store in Kanda. I was 11 years old when I started learning samisen. I memorized the tunes while I was watching other students practise, so when my turn came it was easy. I had a good memory then, but now my memory is bad because I am 97 years old.
Q: How many years did you study samisen, about 5 years?
A: Longer than that.
Q: How much education did you have?
A: I quit school after the 6th grade.
Q: Did you get married?
A: Women did not have much education in those days. Yet I taught nagauta (a lomg epic song) music in Seattle. I could not teach dance because it was a different school.
Q: Did you like school?
A: I did not hate it, but I was too busy with samisen lessons.
Q: What did you do after you quit school?
A: I don't remember.
Q: When did you get married?
A: It was 77 years ago.
Q: Did you get married in Japan?
A: No, here. The manager of Furuya Company in Seattle acted as a go-between. In those days Nishiyori bought merchandise from the Furuya Co. and sent them to railroad gang in Montana. One day Mr. Furuya asked Nishiyori if he wanted to marry a girl who had just come from Japan. Nishiyori thought I was too young, because he was 16 years older than I was. He was a short man, and when we had a picture taken together I looked taller with my high-heel shoes, so we had another picture taken with me sitting down, and sent it to Japan.
Q: How old were you when you got married?
A: I came to America in 1905.
Q: How old were you then?
A: I was about 20, so boys followed me around. When I was working at a white family, I had a nail stuck in my finger and I was hospitalized in Seattle General Hospital. There were 8 ladies in one room, and they called me "Jap lady." I did not have $5 to pay the hospital, but a doctor paid the bill for me. I think he wanted to marry me, but I did not want to marry the doctor.

Q; Did you come to America alone?
A: I cannot tell you.
Q: Why not?
A: My sweetheart smuggled me in here to study English. I was going to return to Japan in about 3 years, but I came to like it here so much that I did not want to go back. When I wrote a letter to my sweetheart telling him that I decided to stay here, he wrote me a kind letter telling me to be careful not to marry a drunkard or a good-for-nothing man.
Q: Did the letter come from home?
A: No, not from my father, but from my sweetheart. I came to Seattle in 1905, and went to a Methodist church. Bishop Togo took me to a room and let me stay there overnight for 15¢. I did not have money, and I did not know English so I wanted to learn English.
Q: About how many years did you study English?
A: I could not study. I went to work at Rev. Martin's. Mrs. Martin could not hear well. Rev. Martin used to say long prayers before every meal, before going to bed or after he got up. I wished he would say shorter prayers, but I couldn't tell him that.
Q: When did you have an operation on your legs?
A: I had my legs amputated last year.
Q: Did you stay at the church when you were single?
A: I did housework at the pastor's home.
Q: Did you get married after that?
A: Mr. Furuya was the match-maker. Nishiyori was 16 years older than I was.
Q: Was your husband in Wyoming?
A: No, he was in Montana. He sent food and clothes to Montana from Seattle.
Q: Where did you live after you got married?
A: In Seattle.
Q: Did your husband work for Furuya Co.?
A: Yes.
Q: How old were you when you got married?
A: I think I was around 20.
Q: Was your husband a good man?
A: He was too scrupulous. He wanted even his pants to be creased neatly.
Q: Did you quarrel?
A: I don't like to quarrel, so I avoided it.
Q: Did he hit you?
A: No, never. If he had hit me I would not stayed with him not even a day.
Q: How long did your husband work for Furuya Co.?
A: He did not work for Furuya Co. He worked for the Oriental Trading Co. He sent merchandise to Montana through Furuya Co.
Q: Did he travel around?
A: No.

Q: How did the depression hit you?
A: It did not hit me too hard because I was working. I made pancakes and cookies in place of bread. I learned how to cook.
Q: Did you continue doing housework after you got married?
A: No.
Q: Did you do alteration on shirts to be sent to Montana?
A: Yes, I did. In those days we had old-fashioned sewing machine which made a lot of noise. Later we bought a new machine for $200.
Q: How many children do you have?
A: Just one, but I have grandchildren.
Q: How long did your husband work for the Oriental Trading Co.? Did he work till the war broke out?
A: Yes, he did. In those days there were not many Japanese who could speak and read English like he did. I did not like him too well but I married him because I thought it would have been inconvenient if I married a man who could not speak English. He was 16 years older, and very scrupulous. He never wore a wrinkled clothes.
Q: Did you suffer hardship during the depression?
A: Everybody suffered hardship during the depression. I think the businessmen had a hard time.
Q: Did anything interesting happen when you came here?
A: Nothing interesting happened, but when I was in the hospital boys came to see me with candies and flowers.
Q: Were they Japanese?
A: Yes, they were all Japanese. The doctor was a Japanese, too. He did not charge me for the hospital or operation fee.
Q: Did your husband make much money?
A: Not too much. He was paid $75 a month, so it was not bad in those days.
Q: Did you have enough money while your husband worked for the Oriental Trading Co.?
A: He was paid $75 which was good money in those days, but there was much social expenses. When friends come we had to serve dinner or drinks.
Q: Were there many single Issei men in those days?
A: Yes, there were.
Q: Were they not too good?
A: They came to visit me while I was in the hospital.
Q: Did single men gamble?
A: I think they did. It was no good.
Q: How did you feel when Pearl Harbor was attacked?
A: I thought a terrible thing has happened. My husband was sick in bed at that time. He said that if this was lasted long Japan would be defeated because Japan does not have material to make weapons. I think he was right.
Q: When did your husband die?
A: On January 24, 1942 from asthma. The doctor told him to stop smoking, but he didn't quit until he died.

Q: Was it hard to evacuate without your husband?
A: Yes, it was hard as he was gone. The boat on which my grandchildren came to attend the funeral refused to let them land as they were enemy aliens. I knew a white policeman, so I had to ask him to bring my grandchildren to the funeral.
Q: Where was the Oriental Trading Company?
A: It was in Seattle.
Q: Did you live in Seattle then?
A: Yes.
Q: Where did your son live?
A: He lived on Vashon Island.
Q: Did you have the funeral without any trouble?
A: Yes, I did. We had bought a plot in a cemetary on Vashon Island, so he was buried there.
Q: Did many people attend the funeral? from Seattle
A: Many of my friends came to Vashon Island with Rev. Machinda.
Q: How old was he when he died?
A: He was 77 years old.
Q: Did you evacuate after the funeral?
A: Yes, I did. I was 60 years old and a widow, so some men wanted to marry me, but I didn't want to. When I put on a make-up, wore a wig and danced on the stage I looked young.
Q: Where did you go first?
A: Pinedale.
Q: How was Pinedale?
A: I think it was on 4th July that I danced. It was so dusty that my hair was white with dust.
Q: How was your quarter?
A: It was just a barrack.
Q: Was it very inconvenient?
A: We had to stand in a line to be served at the mess hall. It was so hot that people fainted. More young people fainted than old people.
Q: Did you work at Pinedale?
A: No, I didn't.
Q: Did you learn anything?
A: I taught dancing.
Q: How was the food?
A: I thought it was good.
Q: How was the life at Pinedale?
A: It was not bad, but it was hot.
Q: Where did you go from there?
A: I went to Tule Lake.
Q: How was Tule Lake?
A: It was very hot there, too.
Q: Did you work?
A: No, I didn't.
Q: Did you teach dance at Tule Lake?
A: I do not remember if I taught dance or samisen. I remember teaching nagauta.
Q: Did you take your samisen to the camp with you?
A: I took one with me. It is broken now. I will play it for you someday.

Q: How was the life in camp?
A: I was very busy as 7 or 8 people came to learn dance and samisen .
Q: Did your students perform on the stage in the camp?
A: Yes. My legs were still good then.
Q: You didn't get married any more?
A: No, I was already 60 years old then. But when I wore a wig, put on a make-up and danced on the stage, people wanted to marry me. The make-up made me look like a doll, and I didn't look 60.
Q: Did you stay in Tule Lake all the time?
A: Yes.
Q: Didn't you move to other camps?
A: There were 5 camps, and they all wanted me to come as I was the only one who could sing gidayu (a kind of ballad drama).
Q; Did you have your voice trained for gidayu?
A: Yes, my gidayu teacher was the best samisen player. He was very strict.
Q: Wasn't there a loyalty problem in Tule Lake?
A: Yes, there were families split by it here and there.
Q: Which side were you loyal to?
A: I had to be on my son's side. My son was born in Japan, so he was not an American citizen.
Q: There were 2 questions; one was on loyalty and the other one was on draft. Were you going to stay here?
A: Yes, because I didn't have any other place to go to.
Q: Do you have one son or two sons?
A: One.
Q: Was he born in America?
A: He was born in Japan.
Q: Was he born when you went back to Japan?
A: Yes.
Q: Did you stay in Tule Lake all the time?
A: I went to four different camps; Jerome, Hart Mountain and Roah.
Q: Where did you go first?
A: I think I went to Jerome.
Q:Did anything interesting happen in camp?
A: Nothing interesting happened, but I was very busy teaching students. I had plenty to eat because everybody brought Japanese food to me.
Q: Where did you go after you left the camp?
A: I think I came back to Seattle.
Q: Where were your son, then?
A: I think he was on Vashon.
Q: Did he go into service?
A: No, he didn't.
Q: When did you start smoking?
A: One day my husband and I went to pick huckleberry on Vashon Island. When lunch time came we found out that a dog had carried away our lunch. We were hungry so we ate huckleberry. Then my husband took a pipe out of his pocket and started smoking, and said it was better than huckleberry. I asked for a puff, and that is how I started smoking.

Q: Have you been back to Japan?
A: Yes.
Q: When was it?
A: Long time ago I went to Japan with my husband. I didn't stay too long because my relatives in Akita were troublesome. There are many beautiful women in Akita. That is why they are called Akita Bijin (beautiful women).
T: You must have been very beautiful.
N: I don't know about that. When I put on a makeup, wore a kimono and danced on the stage in Tule Lake, people said I looked like a doll.
Q: Did you say that your son was born in Japan?
A: Yes, and I brought him here when he was 6 or 7. He had the northeastern accent, so my husband did not understand him well.
Q: How long did you study samisen?
A: My samisen teacher was a wife of a sembei store owner. She was surprised that I memorized the music well.
Q: Did you study under other teachers?
A: I studied nagauta under a teacher in Kanda, Tokyo. I studied gidayu under another teacher. He was a very strict teacher, but he taught a blind student very kindly. I think because he knew that the blind student had to make a living with the music.
Q: Since you could sing and dance, did anybody tell you to become a geisha?
A: Yes, but I didn't want to. I just wanted to teach. I could teach nagauta, but I couldn't teach dance because of different school.
Q: Don't you think you should have stayed in Japan?
A: Maybe I should have, but I don't like it in Japan because the people are too bothersome and irritate me.
Q: What kind of a man was your sweetheart?
A: He was a politician. He sent me here for me to study English.
Q: Did he send you any money for schooling?
A: No, I had to work.
Q: Were you supposed to marry him after you went back to Japan?
A: Yes, I came here with such intention, but after I came here I didn't want to go back to Japan because it is too bothersome over there.
Q: When was the most difficult time since you came to America?
A: It was the time my husband and I cleared the land on Vashon Island. If we had $150 they would have cleared the land for us, but we did not have the money, so my husband and I piled up the branches of trees and burned them. It was a very hard work.
Q: Did you buy the land?
A: Yes, in 1909 we bought 5 acres of land for $45 an acre. It was $225 all together. We are leasing it for about $160 now. My son is now living in the house we built. His first wife was killed by a car accident. Then he married a white woman, but she ran away with another man after spending all his money. He is living alone now.
Q: How old is he now?
A: He is 65 years old. He takes good care of me.

Q: When did you go back to Japan?
A: Before the war, more than 30 years ago.
Q: Did you go back with your husband?
A: I think he went to say good-bye to his relatives. He died when he was 77 years old.
Q: Was your son born while you were in Japan?
A: Yes, he was. He has his citizenship paper. I have three grandchildren and one very cute great grandchild. I had a picture taken with him.
Q: Were you around 25 years old when you came to America?
A: About 23 or 24.
N: The bamboo curtain reminds me of a song. Shall I sing it?
T: Yes , please.
N.

Take ni uguisu	Nightingale on the bamboo
Ume ni wa suzume	And sparrow on the plum
Oya, kore wa kichigai	Oh! what a crazy mistake
Torichigai	

Q: Is that a dodoitsu (Japanese limerick)?
A: Yes, it is. There are hundreds of dodoitsu.
Q: What does that mean?
A: Nightingale is supposed to be on a plum tree, and sparrow is supposed to be on a bamboo, but it is turned around, so it is a crazy mistake.
Q: Did you learn all those dodoitsu in Japan?
A: There was a dodoitsu society in Tokyo, and we met once a month. We were given a theme on which we had to write a dodoitsu.
Q: Did you learn all those while you were in Japan?
A: Yes, I did. There are many such songs in nagauta, kiyomoto or tokiwazu.
Q: If you had stayed in Japan you could have become a dance teacher, couldn't you?
A: Yes. I was asked to teach dance here, but I could not teach dance because I was from different school.
T: Tell me about the land you bought on Vashon Island.
N: On September 9, 1909 my husband and I went to Vashon Island. There were many trees growing on the land. If we had paid $150, two teams of men would have cleared an acre of land for us, but we did not have the money. So we cut down trees, piled them up and burned them. It was a hard work. My husband dug up the rocks and I put them in a wheelbarrow and carried them to the spot where we were going to build a chicken coop. It was hard work, but we had to do it ourselves as we did not have money to hire people.
Q: Did you farm there?
A: We had a poultry business; we raised chicken, turkey and geese.
Q: How long did you manage the poultry business?
A: From 1909 till the war broke out.

Q: Didn't your husband work for the Oriental Trading Company?
A: He quit the company before he started the poultry business.
Q: When did he quit the company?
A: I don't remember when.
Q: Did the poultry business go well?
A: Yes, because I took good care of our customers. I reduced the price of leftover eggs from the previous week by 5¢ a dozen, so the customers liked it.
Q: Were the birds in cages?
A: They were inside a wire fence. Turkey and geese did not come down until feeding time.
Q: Did chicken stay in the coop?
A: Yes. They used to stay under the shade of a big tree near the hatchery. Sometimes the chicken went over the fence. Then the dog barked, so we went out and found the dog holding the chicken under his paw. He did not let go of the chicken until we patted his head and thanked him.
Q: Were turkey wild or did you raise them from chicks?
A: We hatched turkey eggs in incubators. Sometimes we let hen sit on turkey eggs because turkey are too heavy. Hen hatched the eggs and took care of the chicks. Poultry business was very busy. We also grew some vegetables, and the customers bought them with the eggs. At that time my husband owed $2,500 to Furuya Company, but I paid all the debts. I have a lot in the cemetery beside my husband's, so I can die anytime.
Q: Did you come back to Vashon from the camp?
A: Yes, at that time my legs were still good so I could work.
Q: What did you do with the poultry and the house?
A: I leased it to a family for $60 a month. I heard that they rented one room out for $65 a month and pocketed the money. My son is leasing the house now. We had two more houses, so he can buy grocery with the rent. He has bad legs also.
Q: What did you do with the poultry?
A: I sold them. A strange thing happened. When I left home I put 6 gallons of Japanese <u>sake</u> in the bottom of a barrel, and covered it with blankets and quilts. When I came back I was surprised to find them still there. People who rented the house must not have known that it was in the barrel. I served <u>sake</u> to the people who visited me, and they were happy.
Q: You lost a lot of things, didn't you?
A: Yes, but when I taught dance and music in the camp people gave me <u>sake</u> and tobacco as I did not charge them for lessons. Later on, when the cigaretts were rationed I gave some to the people who liked cigaretts.
Q: What kind of liquor?
A: It was whiskey.
T: Let's quit here. Thank you very much.